

THE

RIVERSIDE



FARMHOUSE

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Cora W Bowman  
Gixon  
Ill.



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RIVERSIDE FARMHOUSE.

BY MRS. M. E. MILLER.



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# RIVERSIDE FARMHOUSE.

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## CHAPTER I.

EARLY one sunny morning an old-time song, sung by a sweet child voice, floated out of an upper window of the Riverside Farmhouse.

Perhaps in all its winding way from old Whiteface mountain down to the sea, the Hudson did not catch a merrier sound nor pass a lovelier home.

A little mite of a maid was up stairs, helping her mother. Again she came to the window to shake

her duster daintily; and stood to listen to an oriole long enough for you to see her yellow hair and catch the tune she began as the bird flew away.

That was Beulah Seymour.

Her heart is so full of happiness that it runs over all the time, out of her merry blue eyes and her laughing mouth.

Up stairs and down, in one door and out at another, she comes and goes singing the live-long day, setting work, lessons and play to music.

She thinks a good deal about the prayers she prays, and the hymns she sings.

"Mother," she said just then, as she helped to spread the counterpane straight and smooth, "if

“‘I want to be an angel  
And with the angels stand,’

I suppose I’d better behave a little like an angel down here!”

“I think so,” said her mother. “But I think neither you nor Johnnie were at all angelic when you were disputing before breakfast.”

“Well”—Beulah looked pitifully discouraged—“I’m sorry; but I guess if I had seen two hundred angels looking in the windows I should have slapped Johnnie just the same, he teased me so! But I’ll try not to be so cross next time!”

Oh, she is a very human child; but you see she really *thinks*, and tries to do right.

Next, she found herself in the kitchen, where Jennie Murray, the

her duster daintily; and stood to listen to an oriole long enough for you to see her yellow hair and catch the tune she began as the bird flew away.

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Next, she found herself in the kitchen, where Jennie Murray, the

maid-of-all-work, was picking chickens.

Jennie looked up smiling, as Beulah came in singing "Precious Jewels." The kind-hearted little girl quickly set new words to the tune she loved, as she took the broom and began to sweep in a womanly way.

"Three chickens to pick, Jennie !

Well, I guess you're in a flurry.

I'll take hold and sweep up

Your hot kitchen in a hurry.

I wont bother, nor break—so,

Good Jennie, do n't worry ;

I'll begin at the corners

Sure as your name is Murray."

When the kitchen was swept and Jennie had thanked her a great many times, she went into the sitting-room, where Grandma Sey-



mour sat, cutting and basting patchwork.

“Come, Beulah,” grandma said; “your block is waiting for you.”

Then busy Beulah brought her bit of a thimble, and began the work that grandma expected her to do every morning.

“Guess it’s going to be easy to sew because it’s so pretty. This blue is like Ella’s dress; and this brown is like yours. Why it’s as pretty as—as you, grandma!”

“Why, Beulah!” exclaimed the good old lady looking over her spectacles to see what the child meant.

“Of course you’re the prettiest grandma in the world, with your nice gray curls. When I get big,

and you get little, I'll buy you a pink dress like mine, and a red feather in your hat, and a yellow sunshade, and red shoes and blue gloves, and you needn't ever sew a patch unless you want to!"

"Thank you, especially for the shoes and sunshade. But don't you want to sew this morning?"

"Ye-es—I would, after I find out where grandpa is; he told papa he was going to look at the melons, and maybe he would take me."

"Here he is!" grandpa called cheerily from the piazza.

The half-glass door of the sitting-room opened on the piazza, where everybody loved to sit and admire the view. The morning paper was on the old gentleman's knees, but

he was enjoying more than the news, the breeze that blew his gray hair playfully, as he watched the boats passing up and down the river, and the trains coming and going rapidly on the other shore.

“Calico-patch first, Beauty, if grandma says so; and melon-patch afterward; grandpa can wait!”

“Grandma, do you think it’s very polite to call me by the bossy’s name?” Beulah said, making-believe pout.

“It’s hardly necessary for him to call either his calf or his baby Beauty, I think!” said grandma, who was a little afraid grandpa would spoil his grandchildren. “There, there, Beulah, I see two long stitches!”

“O grandma; I do n’t think you

need spectacles, if you can see such a little bit o' naughty as that!"

"What makes me tell you when the stitches are too long, Beulah?"

"So I can pick em out, likely."

"No, that's only half the reason. It is so that you will get so used to taking short, even stitches, that by-and-by you will never take an uneven one. Shame on a lady that can't sew well! It's no great credit to sew nicely, but to sew badly is a great disgrace."

"Come, now," said grandpa, reaching in for his cane. "If we're going to get melons for dinner."

"Pull out the basting first, Beulah; carefully, do n't break it; there, wind it on the small spool. Now you may go."

Quickly Beulah found her sun-bonnet, and big, black Cæsar challenged her to a race down the hill.

Grandpa followed slowly.

Arrived at the melon-patch he was quite as happy as his little girl; his favorite fruit had grown so well.

He took out a pocket-rule, in his haste to measure a big melon.

"What do you call that, grandpa?"

"A cantelope."

"No—that inchy thing."

"Oh! a foot-rule; twelve inches make a foot. I've carried this ivory rule in my pocket forty years, I suppose, little girl."

"O grandpa; as long as you read those people waited in the wilderness for the promised land!"

"Yes, dear; but I've got a golden

rule, that I've carried sixty-odd years. I guess I'll give it to you now." Grandpa's eyes twinkled.

"Oh! shiny gold, grandpa!" Beulah hopped around the little heap of picked melons. "But I haven't any pockets!" she said wofully, standing still again.

"But you must carry this rule in your heart."

"I can't measure melons with it then, grandpa!" Beulah held out her hand for the shining treasure.

"I don't know, you must measure your life by it." Grandpa placed his hand lovingly on her head. "Here it is, Beulah, *Do unto others as you would have others do unto you!*"

"Oh, I see grandpa, it's something

from the Bible to learn. I'll put it away in my heart, with my love and my songs. But please say it again."

And over and over they said it, as they went slowly back, carrying a basket of melons between them; Cæsar doing his best, in vain, to entice Beulah away from dear grandpa's side.

## CHAPTER II.

“Now, you may scold, and *quonk* and hiss away, you old geese ; you can’t have my nice melon !”

Beulah sat on the door-step of the outer kitchen or laundry, where the water from the spring was always running. She liked its tinkling, plashing music almost as well as a cold drink, as she rested there often ; and as often fed the geese which were grandmother’s pets.

“Just you behave yourselves till I eat up and drink up this lovely, juicy, pinky piece, and I’ll go ask Barney for some corn for you !”

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noisy geese tried to tell that they did not like to wait—that they would rather have melons now, than corn by-and-by—or that melons were none too good pay for the feathers grandma picked off of them yesterday. Then they seemed to remember that grandma said those very feathers were going into a pillow for Beulah's bed, and there was the very Beulah eating just out of their reach.

“Hiss'ss'ss'ss!” they hissed so spitefully, that Beulah got up and ran away.

She was tripping down to the cornhouse, when her mother called her to come in, as it was the lesson-hour.

From eleven to twelve o'clock

each day, Beulah studies her little lessons and recites them to her mother. After dinner she practises an hour, or the same kind teacher gives her a lesson at the piano.

Ella and John, the only brother and sister she has, go to school in the village three miles away.

Their father takes them there in the morning ; but often mother and Beulah go with the old pony and rockaway, to get them in the afternoon.

Beulah has a white kitten, that she pets and plays with as if it were a live doll. The kitten has about as much taste for music as some little girls have ; and Beulah was as foolish as some mothers,

to insist on such a pupil's practising.

There was once a woman who had plenty of money but very little sense. She sent her child to school, and was vexed because the teachers did not make her a smart scholar.

"Isabella has no capacity for learning," one of the teachers told her.

"No capacity! Then I'll buy her one!" said the silly mother.

But ah! she could no more buy a capacity for her dull Isabella, than Beulah can buy one for her Kitty White; *that*, only God can give.

Kitty's music-lessons, however, do some good in teaching her mistress patience.

“Now, Kitty,” said Beulah, that day, “the first thing William Henry learned was ‘scaling up and down;’ so you must try it.”

“Me-eow,” pleaded poor puss.

“Begin now,” slapping pussy’s paw; “mind your notes! There, that’s a tol’able scale for a kitten. Now let’s try Ella’s new song.”

The accompaniment ran pretty much as Kitty wished—Beulah was so busy getting words to suit the tuneful time.

“O Kitty White, O Kitty White,  
Another time you’ll get it right!  
No flats nor sharps—you’ve hit it quite,  
You darling precious Kitty White.”

Then Kitty was released, after a hug that would have astonished the “little small wee bear” himself.







"Come, Beulah," called her mother; "it is time for us to go. Take this bundle to the carriage; I have the basket to carry."

"What is in the bundle, mother?" asked Beulah, as Barney stowed it under the seat.

"Some clothes that you and Johnny have outgrown, that will help clothe the little Donnellys."

"And what's in your basket?" as Barney snugged that away carefully.

"Oh, some goodies for two or three sick people on our way."

Then they were seated; Mrs. Simmons took the reins, and Peter, the pony, started off.

"I know what they'll say, mother!" Mrs. Donnelly always says,

‘Your goodness, ma’am, is past the common!’ and the Flints ‘bless you’ way into the carriage.”

“Beulah, I’m afraid you are laughing at them. That is wrong, for they thank us as well as they know how. But we should do as much for them, if they did not bless us, I hope; it is only ‘lending to the Lord,’ you know.”

“Yes, mamma; the Lord that made them poor and us rich.”

Pony Peter trotted on over the broad smooth road, with the river in sight on the right hand, the grand blue mountains on the left; comfortable farmhouses, both right and left; birds, sunshine, and the sweet September air making the ride very pleasant to that thought-

ful child. "I'm glad I'm not Maggie Donnelly," she said at last, "that is n't wicked, is it, mother?"

"No; you cannot be too glad or too thankful that God has given you such a good home, such a good father—"

"And the lovindest mother that ever was!" Beulah added, squeezing mother's arm lovingly.

"And so much to help you to live a beautiful life. But take care that you never think yourself any better than Maggie Donnelly, or Rosy Flint. For we have nothing that God has not given us, and in any hour he may take our good fortune away."

"Would that make hard times?"

"Yes, that would seem hard in-

deed ; but hundreds of people have lost more money than papa owns ; and little girls who have been cared for as tenderly as you have in these hard times no more comforts than Maggie or Rosy."

" I am sorriest for them, mother."

" Then remember, dear, that what you have ought to make you humbly thankful and happy, but not proud. You must do all the good you can with the means God gives ; and remember the only place where good things surely last for ever is in heaven."

## CHAPTER III.

NOVEMBER came, and found the apples all gathered, and the grape-racks and arbors stripped of their delicious grapes.

Only the nuts were left on the trees waiting for the frost to open the burs and let down what the children craved, and claimed as their portion of the year's harvest.

One Saturday morning, Mr. Seymour said they would not wait any longer for Jack Frost to help them, he opened the burs so slowly; although the north wind had covered the ground with leaves the night before. It would take patient children, with bright eyes and busy

ingers, so that the ones after he finished the ones.

"Harris!" shouted Johnny—yes actually shouted at the breakfast table.

"My composition can wait till afternoon," said Ella.

"Then you can write something else about nothing," suggested her mother.

"I can help you!" Harris said.

"To be sure, bright-eyes!" said grandma; "only be sure to put on overcoats and wrap up warm, for it is very chilly; or else I am getting old—sure that can't be, can it, mother?"

"Just run out to scrounge off with the rest and enjoy this frolic like any boy!" grandma answered.



"That's all right—4 days it will  
be."

So with the animals all packed  
up in gear and they turned about  
to make ready.

Sammy helped Johnny to find a  
very light pole. The two poles  
being the regular ones used for  
poles and when they were  
ready, they went through the valley  
to the top of a dark, high, which a  
little creek was making down to the  
river.

There was a hill the summit of  
up which they began to climb  
and quite as much as a square  
and quite as comfortable as any  
place. When they got to the top the  
water was then turned to rock. They  
went down against the rock to

began switching the scattered clusters of burs.

Down tumbled the nuts; while with little screams of delight the children hunted for them among the damp grass and fallen leaves.

"Oh, oh, is n't this fun, grandpa?" cried Beulah.

"Yes, child, yes!" he said, leaning on his cane.

"We all do fade as a leaf," Ella heard him saying softly to himself.

"Grandpa, does it make you sad to see the gay leaves fall?" she asked.

"Why, yes and no, child. I don't fret because the summer is gone, and I must sit by the fire pretty much till spring; but you see these leaves make me think of the scores

of folks that have fallen around grandmother and me as we have jogged along. Dear me, of all the boys and girls that went to school with us, there are not half a dozen feeble old folks left to talk with us about old times. There, run down the bank, Johnny says the nuts fall thickest there. I'll help Birdie fill her pint-cup here!"

Papa Seymour was almost up to the top of the tree, after a few tempting nuts, when Beulah saw the branches swaying in the wind, and cried in fright for him to come down; they did not want those high nuts. Then lightly he swung himself down, from limb to limb, till he slid at last down to the ground beside her.

"Well, Busy B.," he said, "how much a quart do you ask for chestnuts?"

"I guess I must pay you, papa, forty kisses for a pint!"

"Oh, that's too many!" laughed her father.

"I've seen 'partial payments,'" said grandpa, smiling; "and I've seen partial papas!"

"Come, Johnny," Mr. Seymour called; "I'm going across to the spring-lot to thrash those trees. You may come back again if you think you are leaving any among the leaves here."

"Oh, wait, papa; see what we have found," called Ella, coming, flushed and panting, up the steep bank.

Johnny followed, showing a mud-turtle in his hand.

All crowded around to see the homely creature.

Mr. Seymour took the turtle, saying to the children, "See the dull mud-color of his shell, given him so that he can lie unnoticed on the ground. See now, how closely he can draw his feet within his shell." Then he cut an E. and a J. and a B. on the yellowish, under side of the shell; then a '75 for the year in which this was happening.

"Does n't it hurt the poor turtle?" Ella asked.

"I think not, or I should not do so," said her father.

"No more than it hurts horses to have their hoofs pared," said

grandpa; "no more than it hurts you to cut your nails."

"There, John," said the carver, "I think we'll know this fellow if we meet him out walking another time. Put him down by the creek, and come help Ella over the wall. Steady now, grandpa; there, you are over and I'll hand you the baskets. Now, Beulah, papa will jump you over—here we go!"

O dear! what a frolic they had under those three trees. "Pell-mell" the sweet brown nuts rattled down upon heads and shoulders. Now and then Beulah was a little hurt by the prickly burs; but she did not complain.

The big walnut-tree in the lane was the last to be whipped.

The children had watched the nuts as they fell, from day to day, and picked up odd pints of them. But now they found a good many on the ground which had been gnawed by teeth sharper than their own.

“Ah, those roguish squirrels!” said Mr. Seymour. “Here, Beulah, you begged me not to shoot the squirrels last week, when they were chattering so boldly in the trees under the window; now see how they thank you!”

“Poor little hungry fellows,” said Beulah; “they do n’t know that we like the nuts better than acorns. Perhaps if I go tell them, papa, they will stay in the woods and eat the acorns and leave us our nuts.”

While papa climbed the great tree and began thrashing, away she went to reason with a saucy, red squirrel that sat in a tree by the orchard-wall, cracking a nut, while she talked to him.

“The air is so still just now, father,” said Mr. Seymour, after he followed the last nut down, “that we might set fire to Barney’s brush-heap. Children, do you want a bonfire?”

“Oh, yes, indeed,” John answered for all; then he ran across to the house for matches. The baskets and pails were set carefully down among the tangled berry-bushes and golden-rods.

Soon the heap was fired; it snapped and crackled a while before the



flame became a certain thing—father and grandfather walking around it and feeding the small fire with little twigs, till at last the homely heap was a beautiful sight round which the children played and shouted with delight.

“Just so I saw the prairies burning, once on a time,” said grandpa.

“O grandpa! who would be so naughty as to burn the fairies?” cried Beulah, quite distressed.

“No, dollie; it was a great plain called a prairie, flat as a house-floor, covered with dry grass, that caught fire from a locomotive.”

“Are there any fairies—I mean prairies, left to burn, grandpa?”

“Yes, dear, miles after miles of ’em, and the flames run over them

faster than these do over this brush. I went out hunting—”

“Oh, tell us all about it,” interrupted John.

“On the prairies, when I was a young man and lived in Buffalo for three years.”

“Lived in Buffalo three years!” screamed Beulah with such a puzzled look, that papa said, “She thinks grandpa did something more wonderful than Jonah,” and all laughed heartily.

“Should think you’d be afraid of his horns,” said Beulah, still puzzled about grandpa’s sojourn.

“Oh, I meant a city a little way west.”

“Did you go there on an all-night boat?” asked the little girl.

“Yes, almost an all-week boat—on a packet, that carried us through the canal splendidly for those days.”

Papa Seymour saw that grandpa was shivering and the children were instinctively warming themselves by the fire. So he said they had better go back to the house; the fire would burn out by itself, and mother would be getting anxious about her little daughters.

Beulah told the squirrels they would come back, after dinner, for the walnuts. And John said to Ella as they went home, “It can’t be any sin to be proud of five quarts of chestnuts, when we’ve worked so hard to get ’em.”

## CHAPTER IV.

ONE cold morning, starting with the children for school, as Mr. Seymour drove through the gate, he came suddenly in front of a little bare-headed girl, who had her apron full of sprigs of green shrubs and vines.

“If you please, sir,” she said timidly, as he stopped the horses, “would you mind if I pick some of this green out of your woods? We get Prince’s Pine and other stuff nearer home, but here are the only berries I can find anywhere.”

“What do you want of them?” he asked kindly.

“I and the boys get the greens,





and mother helps us make wreaths to sell in town, for the folks to hang in their windows, agen Christmas."

"Why, it's Maggie Donnelly," whispered Ella to her father.

He glanced at Ella hooded and cloaked so comfortably, and then at the poorly-clad child, and said :

"Yes, yes : pick all the rubbish you want, in the woods. But first go down to the house, and tell the folks I sent you there, for another breakfast. Get up, there, Peter ; go on, Frank !"

"Good-by, Maggie," Ella said, and away they rode.

Maggie did not quite want to go to the handsome house and ask for something to eat, although the breakfasts she got at home were

never hearty enough to make her refuse a better one if offered to her ever so soon after she had washed up the "porritch-bowls."

She wanted to see Beulah, and felt sure of kind words from her mother; so she went timidly down to the house on the river-bank.

Cæsar lying on the piazza, growled as she came towards him, on her way around to the kitchen-door.

Maggie did not know that he gave such a warning to the house whenever a stranger came in sight, and she was afraid. But the door opened behind the big watchdog, and Beulah called to her: "Why, Sissy Donnelly, come right in here; did you come to see me? Cæsar wont hurt you, will you, Cæsar?"



The dog was a little ashamed when his mistress caught him by the collar to make sure of his better behavior, as he rose and stood eyeing the ragged frock of the blushing visitor who could not find her tongue.

Beulah drew her into the pretty room where grandpa sat reading, and grandma was again cutting patchwork.

"Let's go and find mamma!" said Beulah, seizing Maggie's cold red hand, and leading her out through the hall.

In the kitchen Mrs. Seymour was beginning to fry a generous batch of crullers. A very good time for Maggie to happen in, to be sure.

Jennie placed a chair beside the stove for her, as Mrs. Seymour kindly welcomed her there.

You can hardly guess how happy the poor child was in the half-hour she sat there—enjoying the savory smell of the frying cakes, the pleasure of watching the skillful cook, and Beulah's merry chatter, even more than the warmth of the light orderly kitchen.

Presently the good mother gave Beulah a plateful of the crullers for herself and Maggie, and very happy the oddly-mated little girls were together. Then Jennie gave each of them a cup of milk.

Seeing Maggie shudder when she looked out at the flying snowflakes, Mrs. Seymour said:

"Tell your mother I think you ought not to wander so far alone ; one of your brothers should come with you ; you might fall among the rocks and stones and not be able to help yourself up."

"Mother does not fret, ma'am ; she says God takes double care of such poor children."

"You are right, I think, Maggie. Most little girls could not run bare-headed to-day without getting sick."

"But my thick hair keeps my head warm, and master Johnny's shoes are iligant intirely !" said Maggie cheerfully.

"Yes, it is beautiful, heavy hair ; but you will be glad to wear Beulah's hood, now the snow has come."

"Please let me give it to her,"

cried Beulah, hurrying to bring the comfortable speckled hood, that had kept first Ella's ears, and then her own, very warm, so long that mamma thought she could spare it then.

When Beulah tied it snugly under her chin, Maggie rose to go, thanking them prettily for the crullers and the hood; then blushing as Mrs. Seymour put around her neck a warm, old cape, and hung on her arm a small pail filled with crullers, for the children left at the poor Donnelly home.

That same night a boy met Jennie at the woodpile, and handed her back the pail and as pretty a Christmas wreath as ever hung in those sightly windows. Then the boy ran shyly away.

The next night was Christmas eve. "Better hurry to bed, children," said their mother, who seemed busier and happier than usual, after supper.

"Yes, Beulah, before old Santa Claus kicks the dash-board out of the chimney!" said Johnny.

"Guess you mean the fire-board," laughed Ella.

"Well," said Beulah with a sigh, "I'd give all the five-centses in my bank to see him!"

"And I'll give all my five *senses* till he comes!" said quick-witted Johnny.

"If I should see him out there on the snow," Beulah went on, looking out in the moonlight with big eyes, half afraid she should see him;

"if I could see him out there, I'd wink my finger to him to come in, just so," and she beckoned with her little fat finger.

"No, you wouldn't, I'm sure! You'd be afraid!" said John.

"O papa! oh my! there he is!" screamed Johnny, *really* afraid; and all followed the direction of his eyes towards the door.

Through the glass half of it, they saw what startled the boy, and his elders too, indeed.

A moment after, a tap was heard. Mr. Seymour opened the door and *somebody*, hidden in furs, came in.

"Are you the right honorable, best-beloved Santa Claus?" papa asked, as his eyes answered the twinkle of the new-comer's.

He was surely "wrapped all in fur, from his head to his foot." A huge fur cap came down to his handsome brown eyes. Frost covered his eyebrows; icicles hung from his beard. Papa Seymour grasped his hand firmly, and walked him right up to the fire.

Mamma, laughing, came near; while grandma and grandpa were as certainly wonder-struck as the children. The stranger looked at them all, and then asked in a deep voice,

"Are you all ready for Santa Claus to-night? Have you been good children all the year round?"

"Oh, I know you, old Santy!" said Ella, both provoked and delighted.

And Johnny made a spring

right into his arms; but Beulah still stood by grandpa's chair.

"It's Uncle Henry Brown!" cried Johnny, reaching for the fur cap, and freeing the great white forehead. But not until the fur coat had been drawn off by mamma and papa, and the icicles were wiped away from his smiling mouth, did Beulah venture nearer.

Uncle Henry explained that he had come straight down from Canada; and finding no chance to ride down from the village had walked on, to be in time to hang up his stocking with the children's.

Such fun as they had around the table while Uncle Henry ate his supper!

Such comfort as they had after-



ward, when Uncle Henry, after much talking and laughing, asked if they could not sing together.

Ella played carols and the children sang, as they had practised in Sunday-school.

Then mamma played and old and young sang dear old hymns.

Last of all, Uncle Henry played and sang so beautifully,

“While shepherds watched their flocks by night,” that the old Bible story came before the children like a panorama, and filled them with the spirit of Christmas.

Soon after they went to bed, the youngest in full faith that Santa Claus would come before morning.

As for Ella and John, their trust in their patron-saint was shattered:

but they had enough besides to make them happy. Johnny fell asleep wondering if the star that went before the shepherds still held its place in the sky; but Ella knew that though that star had faded away, Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, had risen, and her heart was opening to welcome his light.





